

Ken speaks to *FE Week* about his EMA pledge



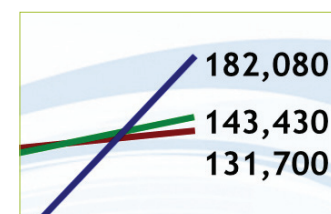
Ken Livingstone, London mayoral hopeful, speaking to Nick Reinis, *FE Week*'s news hound. See page 4 for more.

Picture by Nick Linford

Monday 5 March 2012

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Apprenticeships evidence to BIS Select Committee



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Funding future faces further formulation

FE Week Exclusive

Nick Summers

@SummersNicholas

Implementation of a new streamlined and simplified funding system for adult skills that had already been delayed until 2013/14 has suffered a further setback, following a rethink on how apprenticeships might be funded.

A newly formed Skills Funding Agency advisory group has been meeting monthly since December, and has said plans to fund apprenticeship provision based on individual frameworks, rather than component learning aim level, requires further testing.

Chris McLean, vice principal of North Hertfordshire College and member of the Funding External Technical Advisory Group told *FE Week*: "Only two areas related

to basic skills and apprenticeship rates have more work to be done and on both counts it's the work and scrutiny of the group that is asking for extra detailed modelling to be undertaken to satisfy ourselves that the new system will work at the organisation level as well as for the sector as a whole."

A document published this week by the SFA, entitled 'A New Streamlined Funding System for Adult Skills', says "following advice from the Funding External Technical Advisory Group we are reviewing this [apprenticeship funding]. We are continuing to consult and develop our approach to simplify apprenticeships funding and align it to the principles across the rest of the Adult Skills Budget.

"As a result we now expect to be able to publish the principals and rates for funding Apprenticeships no later than May 2012."

The first version of the funding reform document was published in October 2011 and included a plan for ten apprenticeship framework funding rates within the 'learning aim rates matrix' of 30 rates. This updated version now excludes apprenticeships, and the remaining provision has doubled to 40 rates.

Mick Fletcher, a visiting Research Fellow at the Institute of Education and consultant, says the document shows that the government is struggling to streamline or simplify the funding system for adults.

"Once again simplification proves not to be as easy as the Department thought," Mr Fletcher said.

"They are still struggling to accommodate basic skills, and can't yet work out how apprenticeships fit; and they didn't even try to cover safeguarded learning.

"The reason for the difficulties just might be that it's not really about

simplification at all, but about imposing a centrally determined, price based funding system instead of one that carefully reflects colleges' costs."

David Hughes, chief executive of NIACE and until recently the Director of Provider Services at the Skills Funding Agency, said: "We want to work closely with the government and the SFA to try and get a system which has the right sort of incentives for people who it should support and help them not only get into learning, but to succeed as well.

"We want to make sure that any changes do not disadvantage certain types of learners and that those changes recognise the very diverse needs of different learners in different situations."

The SFA proposals also appear to scrap well trailed plans for Outcome Incentive Payments, and replace them with the piloting of a payment

to the provider of half the 20 per cent of achievement funding where eligible unemployed learners prematurely leave their course to get a job.

The document reads: "Job outcome funding will be piloted in 2012/13 using the existing funding models, with 10 per cent job outcome funding where a learner leaves and enters work without achievement of the learning aim. This is straightforward in workplace learning, however, in classroom learning the funding will be factored into the year-end reconciliation."

Plans are also outlined for introducing a funding cap for apprenticeship learners. The report states: "An annual funding cap of £4,400 (applied to the unweighted rate) per learner will be piloted during 2012/13 shadow working. The level of an annual funding cap for Apprenticeships is still being considered as part of the work set out above."



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Subcontractors courted by SFA into direct relationship

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Subcontractors with a total allocation of more than £1 million are being offered a direct contract by the Skills Funding Agency (SFA).

Businesses were sent a letter by the SFA in mid-January encouraging them to bid for a contract worth at least £500,000 as part of a one-off funding pilot by the agency.

The letter says successful bidders will receive funding for 16 months to deliver full apprenticeship frameworks aimed at learners of all ages, provided they can begin the delivery from April and enroll a quarter of predicted learners by August.

The SFA says the pilot is designed to "test the appetite" of large subcontractors which have the capacity to move to a direct contractual relationship with the agency.

A spokesperson for the SFA told *FE Week*: "This is intended as a pilot to inform the potential introduction of a structured long term process to introduce new entrants to the education and training market, providing the Agency with access to additional capacity to deliver high quality learning opportunities to communities and businesses across the country."

The pilot, which the SFA says will help develop the funding requirements for 2012/13, will test how organisations can be funded directly when it is not possible to reallocate provision from under-performing providers.

The Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) say they are supportive of the pilot and agree that large subcontractors should be offered a direct contract by the SFA.

An AELP spokesperson said: "It is right and welcome that the SFA should look at

ways of encouraging new entrants into direct contracts, providing quality remains the watchword for the process.

"In fact, AELP has pressed for a long time for the agency to offer direct contracts to those relatively large sub-contractors who want them, although we feel that it shouldn't be a mandatory development."

The letter says subcontractors were invited to take part in the funding pilot only if they featured on the list of organisations which passed the ACTOR pre-qualification questionnaire and expressed an interest in delivering apprenticeships through the Single Adult Skills Budget (SASB) invitation to tender (ITT) last July.

Deep Blue Sound Limited, which delivers courses in sound engineering, music production and music performance, among others, has a subcontracting allocation of £1.2 million with City College Plymouth, but did not receive the letter.

Nigel Burt, director of Deep Blue Sound, told *FE Week*: "Were I to receive such a letter I would have to think very carefully about how to react.

"We have a good relationship with partners and I would be cautious about doing anything that threatened that without there being a good deal of security in it for us.

"With the almost whimsical way the education landscape seems to be changed at the moment but policy makers, this obviously wouldn't help to give me that security."

He added: "There is little opportunity to plan anything long term as one just doesn't know what 'funders' have in store for us year on year."

The SFA say they are currently reviewing all of the bids submitted for the pilot.

"We are not able to comment on who has applied until the process is complete," an SFA spokesperson added.

FE Week news in brief

Fraudster warning

Professional fraudsters are targeting the FE sector, the Skills Funding Agency has warned.

In the Agency's latest Update, a statement reads: "Recently, we have been made aware that the further education sector may be subject to approaches by professional fraudsters, who are writing to providers requesting a change of bank account details for outstanding payments for the supply of goods and services.

"The requests have all the hallmarks of being genuine and suggest a targeted operation."

They remind staff to remain vigilant, particularly at the end of the financial year in April.

SFA to offer access

Views are being sought on the new Provider Access Project.

The Project will allow providers to view their contract-related data held by the Skills Funding Agency and forms part of the commitment to share information more efficiently.

A survey will be launched on March 7.

In particular, the survey will focus on types and methods of sharing information, identifying the priorities and benefits to the FE sector:

The deadline for the survey will be April 5.

UKCES tender update

The publication of the tender documents for the Employer Ownership of Skills pilot has been delayed.

The full application form and guidance was due to be published "towards the end of February 2012", according to a prospectus published by the UKCES.

A spokesperson for the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) said: "BIS and DfE, working with UKCES, will shortly issue the application form and guidance for bidders interested in the Employer Ownership pilot. We are expecting to issue these documents next week."

New college classification cautiously welcomed

Nick Reinis
@fenickr

Colleges will be coming to terms with their new found freedoms after being released from government control.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS), reclassified general further education colleges as part of central government, and sixth form colleges as local government entities, for the purposes of national accounts in October 2010.

But that changed last week when the ONS revealed that colleges would be reclassified to the private sector from April 2012.

It follows the Education Act 2011, which was given Royal Assent in November, through which the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), and Department for Education (DfE) removed a range of restrictions and controls on FE and sixth form college corporations.

While the move has been welcomed, some

have warned caution. Financial consultant Bob Deed, who works in the FE sector, said:

"The ruling is good news; insofar as it means colleges are likely to be spared the additional red tape, which would have been inevitable if they were classified as an arm of central government."

However, he added: "The de-regulation agenda may have downsides. It is likely banks will 're-price' the risk associated with lending to colleges - that will mean higher borrowing costs on new loans.

"Freedoms do raise the stakes. Colleges will have to think for themselves. When things go wrong, they will not be able to blame anyone else."

Julian Gravatt, assistant chief executive for the Association of Colleges (AoC), said the reclassification could save colleges "tens of millions of pounds" in compliance costs in finance departments. He added: "So we've had a near miss at a time when college budgets are being cutback."

Mr Gravatt also said colleges may not no-

tice many differences, as some of the controls have "never been used" and because the effect of the changes would not be revealed until they are actually used.

One example, Mr Gravatt explains, is the Skills Funding Agency has used its legal power to appoint governors several times in the past decade, but has never formally used its power to ask a governing body to dismiss a principal.

Mr Gravatt said: "Allowing colleges to maintain their own affairs is not only beneficial to the institutions themselves, it also brings more clarity to the way public money is spent."

Lynne Sedgmore CBE, executive director of the 157 Group, said: "Clearly the voice of colleges and our business communities have been listened to, and responded to, on this critical matter to good effect."

When announcing the news, skills minister John Hayes said: "I am delighted at this very positive news which we have been working hard to achieve over the last year."

Minister presents update on apprenticeship quality

Nick Reinis

@fenickr

The skills minister John Hayes has told parliament that the review into short duration apprenticeships is due to be finalised by April.

A total of 87 providers have so far been reviewed by the Skills Funding Agency and National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) for running programmes which last six months or less.

However, 29 have been brought to a "satisfactory conclusion" and the review has identified 10 primary contractors and three subcontractors where the Agency and NAS have unresolved concerns. At least one case has been referred to the Agency's Special Investigations Unit.

However, the Agency said: "We are working with providers to review and adapt programmes as necessary and whilst this is ongoing it would not be appropriate to release in detail."

The Agency also said three frameworks are under review, adding: "We are working

with the relevant Sector Skills Councils to ensure these will meet the criteria that apprenticeships for 16-18 year olds should have a minimum duration of 12 months. The wider next steps and ongoing review will continue to be done in consultation with providers, sector and issuing authorities."

The news came as part of Mr Hayes' statement to parliament on progress to drive up quality, as well as introducing new measures for the coming months. Among those is a new 'enquiry panel' which has been set up to "manage contractual and quality failure" as soon as it is identified.

The panel, made up of representatives from the Agency and the NAS, has met once and will report to the minister.

Mr Hayes said: "The majority of apprenticeships are the gold standard in vocational training.

"We must be relentless in our drive to ensure all apprenticeships are as good as the best, to identify and root out any instances of poor quality provision, and to raise the bar on standards.

"I am determined to build on this momen-

tum and go further so as more people than ever have the opportunity to undertake an apprenticeship, every one will receive the high quality training they deserve."

Another new measure will be a requirement for sub-contractors with an aggregate contract value of more than £500,000 to pass a due diligence test.

An Agency spokesperson said the move has been made to "strengthen our oversight and management of the wider training provider organisation network".

The spokesperson added: "This does not remove or reduce the responsibilities or due diligence processes exercised by prime training organisations when selecting or managing their subcontractors.

"If a subcontractor fails to pass the Due Diligence Assurance Gateway, we will review and alert prime contractors. Prime contractors may continue with the subcontractor, but such failure would signal the need for additional checks and a higher level of diligence, monitoring and review on the part of the prime contractor."

The Gateway process is made up of two

parts; an online questionnaire and an assessment of financial health based on latest accounts.

However, the spokesperson added: "The Agency is currently working with the sector in considering all subcontractors completing the Due Diligence Assurance Gateway of the Register regardless of size of contract. All subcontracting must meet the same delivery, quality and value for money as the rest of our provision. The Agency is working with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills to review its policy on sub-contracting and will set out its intentions to the sector once a formal position is agreed."

Simon Waugh, chief executive of the National Apprenticeship Service, said "sound progress" is being made.

He said: "Historically, growth in apprenticeships has been excellent but hasn't always been matched by quality.

"The actions we are taking now are to clearly state expected standards, strengthen the processes of monitoring and assuring these standards and address any areas that fall short."

McLoughlin to head commission

Nick Reinis

@fenickr

Frank McLoughlin CBE, the principal of City and Islington College, will chair an independent Commission on adult education and vocational pedagogy.

The Commission will have the aim of improving adult vocational education; setting out recommendations to ensure adult learners can receive the highest possible standards of teaching and training, and the best learning experience.

It will bring together industry, teacher training colleges, professional associations and leaders and practitioners from the further education sector.

Mr McLoughlin has been Principal of City and Islington College since July 2002. He brings over thirty years of experience to the Commission, having joined the further education sector as a part-time lecturer in 1980.

His appointment was revealed by skills minister John Hayes, who said: "It is great news that Frank McLoughlin has agreed to chair this Commission.

"His wealth of experience in delivering further education and skills in a challenging inner-city environment gives him the right credentials to lead work which will shape the future of teaching and learning for adults in England."

Mr McLoughlin said: "I am absolutely delighted that the Minister has asked me to Chair this extremely important Commission.

"It presents a once in a generation opportunity to raise the status of adult vocational teaching and learning and promote its nature and heritage in its own terms, sitting firmly alongside the academic model."

Lynne Sedgmore CBE, executive director of the 157 Group, a body for which Mr McLoughlin is a former chair, said: "This is a timely and



crucial commission to develop an enhanced pedagogy for adult vocational education.

"Effective teaching and learning is a vital element in enabling the FE and skills sector to flourish and 157 Group is keen to contribute to the commission's work in any way it can."

The Institute for Learning (IfL) has welcomed Mr McLoughlin's appointment.

IfL's chief executive, Toni Fazaeli said: "IfL has long been calling for greater prestige for the vocational, and for an independent inquiry into world-class teaching and training in further education and skills.

"IfL's priority is to engage and draw on evidence from our members, the expert vocational teachers and trainers who can and do make the difference for vocational learners, and their success.

"Our preparatory work, which includes an action research project involving nearly 150 teaching and training professionals across the country, is already well under way.

"It is crucial that young people and adults of all ages should have access to the best possible teaching and learning, to ensure that they have the skills they need for fulfilling working lives and for well-being."

The final findings and recommendations of the Commission are due to be published in Spring 2013.

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FE Week investigates

Mayor candidate pledges London EMA

Following the abolition of the Education Maintenance Allowance, Labour candidate Ken Livingstone pledges to restore London-wide £30-per-week allowance if he is elected as Mayor in May. But he also tells *FE Week* he wants other cities to follow...



Nick Reinis
@fenickr

The battleground for the fight to become the next Mayor of London moved to the FE sector after the Labour candidate Ken Livingstone pledged to reinstate the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) to students in the capital.

If elected when Londoners go to the polls in May, Mr Livingstone says that he will “work to restore” a London-wide EMA of up to £30 per week.

The £560 million EMA was scrapped by the government in 2010 and replaced by the £180 million 16-19 bursary scheme.

However, Mr Livingstone says around 85,000 16-19 year olds in London now miss out on the weekly allowance.

The Mayoral candidate says the £80 million needed to fund the scheme - which represents

the figure previously spent on the allowance - would be found by bringing together existing funds in colleges, universities, and local authorities.

Although previously outspoken on the government’s decision to scrap the EMA, Boris Johnson, the current Mayor of London, is yet to set a clear policy on the matter in the lead up to the election.

Mr Livingstone said: “I want to help young Londoners with their education by easing the squeeze the Tory-led government has imposed on them, and which the Tory Mayor has totally ignored.

“I have been deeply struck by the plight of thousands of students I have met at colleges right across the capital, who have had the lifeline that EMA offered snatched away from them by the Conservative party, whilst the part-time Tory Mayor stood by.”

Although pledging to bring back the EMA in London means it will only help students

who study in the capital, Mr Livingstone hopes it will be a springboard to spur on other cities to act - if he can prove his plan is a success.

Speaking to *FE Week* after revealing his pledge, Mr Livingstone said: “If we demonstrate we can do it, other cities will copy it.”

The news has been met with delight by the National Union of Students (NUS).

Toni Pearce, NUS Vice-President (Further Education), said EMA provided a “vital source of support” for students.

She said: “The government’s decision to scrap it was widely condemned not only by students and their families, but by teachers, think tanks and businesses alike.

“Reintroducing EMA in London would be a huge step towards making sure that all young people in further education receive proper financial support to pay for the bare essentials associated with studying and would set a powerful example to national policy-makers.”

She also added: “Instead of washing their hands of the government’s decision to pull the plug on EMA or protesting their powerlessness, the other mayoral candidates should follow Ken’s lead and commit to reintroducing EMA.”

Mr Livingstone’s announcement was made on Thursday at City of Westminster College, where 17-year-old Brook House Sixth Form College pupil Zakariya Ahmed gave an impassioned speech about how the allowance had impacted his life.

Mr Ahmed said he has been forced to cut down on his hours volunteering with youngsters, in favour of a paid part-time job due to the financial void.

He also said he was called before the education select committee to give evidence on the decision last summer, where he told MPs “it would lead to more young people doing into crime”.

He said: “We need EMA. It’s valuable.

“But some MPs don’t understand because they’re from rich upper class areas and don’t

understand how much £30 can mean.”

Steve Reed, leader of Lambeth Council, has thrown his backing behind the plan.

He said: “The government’s cuts to EMA have caused real hardship for young Londoners. Ken’s plan to reverse the cuts to EMA will make a massive difference to lives of thousands of young Londoners, giving them the chance to learn and make the most of their potential.”

“Some MPs don’t understand because they’re from rich upper class areas and don’t understand how much £30 can mean”

James Mills, head of the Save EMA campaign, described Mr Livingstone’s pledge as “great news for tens of thousands of the poorest teenagers” in the capital.

He said: “It means that they can once again take education as far as their ability lets them and not their ability to pay.

“This will not only set down a marker for other mayoral contests across the country, but has shown it is not about money, but about priorities when it comes down to whether teenagers should have EMA payments.”

He added: “This is a big result for the campaign as it shows that through peaceful protest works, as it is possible to reverse decisions by governments if there is a will.

“We plan to continue lobbying politicians so that we can make commitments to reinstate EMA an issue in all coming election and especially the general election.”

FE Week asks learners what EMA meant to them

The London-wide EMA pledge by Mr Livingstone was witnessed by dozens of students at City of Westminster College on Thursday.

After making his announcement, *FE Week* spoke to five performing arts students at the college on how the EMA has affected their lives.

Chrystal Vidal (17) described Mr

Livingstone’s pledge as “really good”, before adding: “I completely agree with it. Most of my friends left college as they don’t get EMA anymore.”

Meanwhile, Dreni Rezari (17) said the loss of the allowance has created added pressures, adding: “If I was able to have the EMA there would be less stress on you as a person.”

Bradley Rockall (18) was able to use the EMA two years ago.

He said: “I have to ask my mum for money normally every day. It put her under pressure because he’s been ill and hasn’t been working.”

Jody Nolan-Greenwood (18) added: “I had EMA previously and as soon as I found out it was to be scrapped, I was shocked.

“I have learning difficulties, so keeping up on work is difficult and with a job it would make it even more difficult.”

Sarah Kefi (17) said: “The EMA was a really good idea. It helped with little things like travel especially if you lived far away from college.

“The £30-a-week is good - it would really help.”

FE Week profile

Maxine Room ~ her story

Janet Murray

@Jan_Murray

The Principal and Chief Executive of Lewisham College talks to *FE Week*

Maxine Room says she was never an “archetypal academic”. A mischievous child, who liked to chat, her school reports typically read: “could do better if she concentrated.”

Nevertheless she left the Skinners Company School for Girls – a selective grammar school in north London – with a good clutch of qualifications and went to Bath College of Higher Education (now Bath Spa University) to study home economics with teacher training.

Thirty years on, she is in her third principal’s post at Lewisham College and facing one of the biggest challenges of her career to date – a proposed merger with Southwark College.

Room, who started her career as a home economics teacher at Bridgwater College in Somerset, says she never set out to become a principal.

“It’s about making it all work in a way that is going to make our learners successful, and keeping the ship going in the right direction”

Her ambition was to “be the best I could be in the job I was doing” and despite being promoted to middle and senior management posts at both Bridgwater and Filton Colleges (where she became vice principal for curriculum) it was only after prompting from Robin Landman, the chief executive of the Network of Black Professionals, that she started to give the idea some serious thought.

She got the second post she applied for, becoming principal of Swansea College in 2003 – and only the second black female college head in the country.

Four years later, Room moved to Leeds, where she oversaw a large scale merger – bringing three colleges into one – but, to her disappointment, was not appointed principal of the newly merged Leeds City College.

While she admits that missing out on the job was hard at the time, she is philosophical about the experience. If it hadn’t happened,

she may not have ended up in back in London – where her family is still based – as principal of Lewisham College. “I think things happen for a reason,” she says. “I never thought I’d work in London again and I felt like a tourist when I first came back ... but I’m glad things have come full circle.”

When she joined the college, two years ago, she was the only black female principal of a general FE college in London.

Does she think it is still more difficult for black professionals – and particularly women – to get to the top in education? Her answer is careful. “I mentor people, and whether they be men, women, black or white, there’s something about confidence and attitude and building your armoury and being credible no matter what colour or gender you are...but patently, some people don’t get over the threshold, so there are some issues about, you know, what is it that makes the difference.

“Perhaps it is something about the makeup of governing bodies - their ethnicity, gender, disability profile...it’s those stereotypes isn’t it and you’ve got to break those down.”

Stepping into the shoes of the outgoing principal Dame Ruth Silver – a respected figure across the FE sector – was a daunting task, but Room, who describes herself as “practical” leader, says she hopes she has put her own stamp on the college.

But being a principal is not without its challenges, she says, not least having to be a “jack of all trades.”

One day, she might be talking to an MP about education policy, the next a student with a complaint they have about a course.

Just keeping up to date with policy changes, “crystal ball gazing” about where both the organisation – and the sector – is heading, can be exhausting. “It’s about making it all work in a way that is going to make our learners successful, and keeping the ship going in the right direction,” she says. “We [the college leadership team] are constantly analysing, interpreting, identifying and strategising...”

Maintaining a healthy work life balance can also be tough. While Room works out at the gym most mornings, and is mindful to take time out for herself, she admits the edge between work and home life are often “blurred” and there are times when she is sending emails at midnight or working during her holidays.

And with the merger with Southwark College due to take place at the end of June, there are even more meetings and networking events than usual to attend at the moment.

But she is keen to stress that she wouldn’t have it any other way: “I don’t want that to sound as though it’s in any way a heavy burden, because I think it’s given me incredible opportunities and I’ve met some amazing people.”

And she is passionate about the coaching and mentoring work she does for Network



Picture by Nick Linford

of Black Professionals. “When my mentees come back and said I wouldn’t have got that job without you, you’ve really helped...that’s really rewarding.”

“If you’ve got qualifications or had experiences through training and development, it changes you and it gives you more choices”

Room attributes her strong work ethic to her mother, a single parent who worked three or four jobs at a time to support the family.

A tailoress by trade, Room recalls her mother sitting up sewing late into the night while holding down administrative and retail jobs during the day. “I learnt a lot from just observing her and the way that she worked and the way she filled time,” says

Room. “People say ‘how do you fit everything in?’ and I think, well, it is a bit of a jigsaw puzzle but I plan and think and sometimes you do get in a mess, but you get out of it again and I’ve got incredible support mechanisms in college.”

Her mother’s belief in the transformative power of education (she was “adamant” her daughter went to grammar school and benefitted from many of the opportunities she herself has missed out on) has also rubbed off on her. “It [education] is like having a magic wand,” says Room. “It can open so many doors...it’s like abracadabra, you know?”

“If you’ve got qualifications or you’ve had experiences through training and development, it changes you and it gives you more choices.”

She admits that she is often close to tears at college awards ceremonies listening to stories of learners’ achievements - some of whom have overcome huge barriers to get to where they are.

And if there is one thing she hopes she has achieved during her time in the FE sector, it is helping to make that happen. “If I have given more people more choices and opportunities than they would have had, had I not been around, then that’s a wonderful legacy to leave.”

FE Week Expert

Using effective technology in wake of budget cuts



IT management needs to change

The FE sector is starting to see the impact of the budget cuts that were imposed for the year 2011 – 2012, while according to statistics from UCAS, the number of applications from English students to attend university has declined by around nine per cent compared to the previous year.

For FE establishments, this is a double-edged sword – the drop in school leavers going to university should represent more potential students that wish to take part in FE courses and vocational work. However, it also puts more strain on IT systems and resources for supporting these students.

The adage over the past few years across public sector IT has been to “do more with less” and this continues to be the mantra for the foreseeable future. The main consideration therefore has to be around how colleges can use IT to support service delivery more effectively, as well as how these IT networks can be managed at lower cost to the organisation. Systems management is therefore a key point for the future.

Keeping IT up to date is a challenge. All FE students will require at least some access to IT assets, from occasional use of desktops and laptops for students on vocational courses to those that require full suites of digital resources for creative projects or coursework. Behind all these devices is an IT team that has to manage the network, keeping these endpoints updated and secure.

This ability to ‘keep the lights on’ involves day-to-day administration work such as patching applications, installing updates and checking that machines are all secure. According to IT analyst firm Gartner, around 80 per cent of IT budgets are dedicated to this bread and butter work, covering license fees, staff time and general maintenance. Any activity that can reduce the time spent on managing systems is therefore a good candidate for consideration when it comes to cutting costs.

Looking at how you manage desktops from a power perspective is a good idea. For many colleges, they will have at least one ICT suite as well as desktops available for students to use outside formal lessons and in communal areas like libraries.

Depending on the college, these desktops could be on all the time in preparation for students. If this is the case, the likelihood is that they are then idle overnight while still consuming power, which represents a significant cost in just power consumption.

“Around 80 per cent of IT budgets are dedicated to [the] bread and butter work”

There are two potential routes to take here. The first is to prepare a general policy for users to adhere to around turning off machines when they are not in use.

The second alternative is to implement a power management solution that automatically powers down machines when they are not in use. While it would cost money to implement this, the cost savings that can be achieved can be assured.

Further education organisations will undoubtedly come under more pressure this year, as student numbers are expected to rise while budgets remain either static or get cut. However, there are opportunities to continue developing how IT assets are delivered and managed so that teaching services – and ultimately, student support – does not suffer because of these changes.

Seann Gardiner
EMEA Sales Leader, Dell

Increased efficiency, collaboration and reduction of costs are the key



Leeds City College, the third largest FE college in the country has adopted this approach having implemented Microsoft Live@Edu six months ago. The college calculates that it has saved around £150,000 over those six months via the roll out which allows students to access email, data storage capacity and collaboration tools at home, on campus or anywhere else whenever they wish from laptops, tablets and even smart phones.

It allows the students to be provisioned with the information and resources that they need based upon their identity within the college and the courses they are on. Students are even able to reset forgotten passwords themselves, greatly reducing the time required by college IT staff to do password resets.

It was a strategic move by the college to help prepare students for their future work environment since the Office online and email available with Live@Edu are familiar to the students and consistent with the commercial workspace.

Taking the decision to move to the cloud has allowed the college to deliver a cutting edge solution promoting productivity, and collaboration whilst reducing costs, providing a safe, secure, flexible and affordable solution.

The cost of delivering a similar system in house would have required an initial outlay of more than £150k and that figure doesn't include the running costs, training requirements, energy or replacement hardware costs.

“Leeds City College calculates that it has saved around £150,000 over those six months”

There is increasing demand for technology solutions like Live@Edu and Office 365 across academia regardless of the size of institution – it can even be deployed in small schools, preparing secondary school children for life in higher or further education.

Cloud based solutions are affording the colleges and universities the ability to provide each student with an enhanced learning experience regardless of their equipment, what time it is or where they are whilst cutting costs and improving efficiencies; a tick in every box.

Paul Beaumont,
Chief Executive of Salford Software.

It's no secret that today's higher and further education institutions are being forced into a position where they place improved efficiency and cost reduction at the top of their agendas, so it should come as little surprise that the enabler for achieving both of these goals is increasingly technology.

Student recruitment and retention is also a vital part of any FE or HE strategy, driven by the necessity to recruit the full complement of students, improve student experience to achieve better learning outcomes, deliver an improved and more efficient service whilst preparing students for their working lives ahead.

Much has been written about ‘cloud computing’ – essentially it's the ability to access software, data, storage and other computing resources without owning the hardware infrastructure to run it, instead receiving those services across the internet from a cloud provider.

The key advantages of a cloud based approach for colleges is that they no longer have to install or maintain hardware and software on campus which as a result means they experience a reduction in the costs associated with licensing, operation and hardware maintenance.

In addition to these financial savings there is a reduced impact on the environment as there are no power and environmental costs which would be standard in commissioning hardware in a data centre.

This is also true of access to data storage. Each student can have access to around 25GB of storage - far in excess of the usual college storage provision - where they can create, save and share documents and files without the need to provide hardware for storage or to manage it themselves.

FE Week Expert

Finding an alternative to shared services



on the key driver of that cost area. One such “cost-driver” might be MIS cost per student.

The research results show that some colleges spend three times as much as others on running their MIS function. And some spend three times as much on their finance function, and others three times as much on their HR function.

Even more surprising is that the lowest cost functions are to be found in ‘Outstanding’ colleges as measured by Ofsted. One of the highlights of the research is shown in the chart below.

“Some colleges spend three times as much as others on running their MIS function”

In a time of increasing pressure on resources, every college is exploring ways to improve its cost effectiveness. National policy advice continues to nudge colleges towards investing in Shared Service solutions, and yet most colleges are reluctant to give up sovereignty of their support service functions.

But to quote the strap line of a major high street bank: there is another way! Some recent data analysis work has been undertaken to support colleges who wish to improve their cost effectiveness through business process reengineering.

The work stemmed from an analysis of sector benchmarking cost data and recasting the data on a transactional cost basis. This approach seeks to identify how much it costs each college to run its support services, for example its finance function; or HR service; or MIS based

The chart on the right shows the wide range of expenditure levels per learner, when assessing the ‘transactional’ cost of the MIS function by establishing the cost per learner. The wide range of costs is similar if you were to consider the transactional cost ‘per enrolment’ rather than ‘per learner’; though most colleges believe that the key driver of MIS costs is the learner.

And to confirm the earlier comment about quality of service, this is what the Inspection Report of College 2 in the above chart said about the quality of data and MIS at College 2 which is an

‘outstanding’ college as judged by Ofsted:

“Data are accurate and accessible. Staff at all levels are able to access very detailed and useful information with which to judge the progress and outcomes of their courses. The performance management of staff is equally effective.”

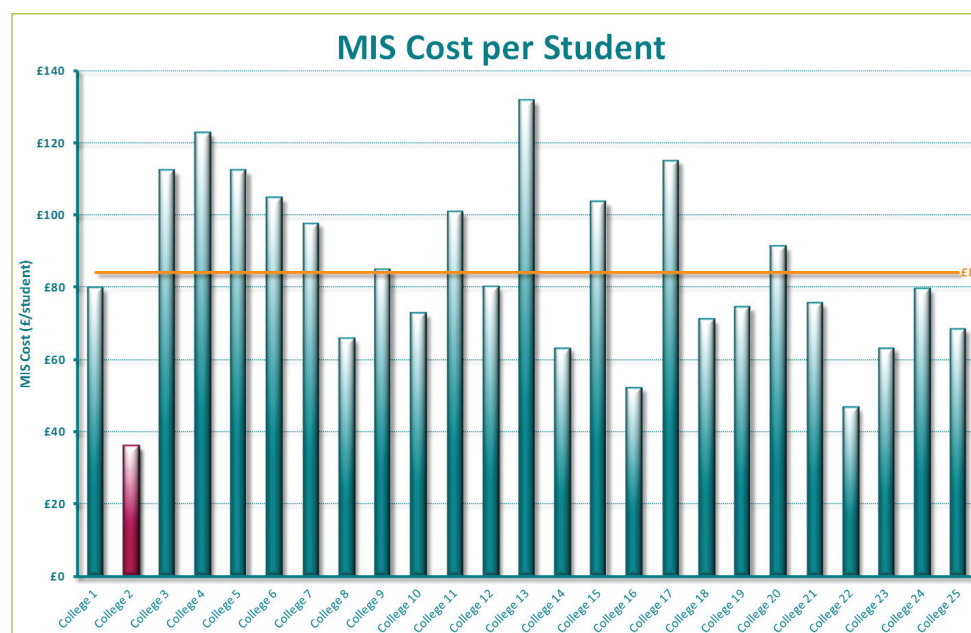
The wide range of costs in the chart means that there is potential for average savings of some 60 per cent in MIS costs if all the other colleges were to structure their MIS function in line with College 2.

In cash terms the research shows an average cost benefit per college of circa £500,000. And at the lowest quartile there would still be poten-

tial savings opportunities of some 33 per cent representing £250k per college. This suggests that there are significant opportunities for colleges to reduce some of their back office costs without moving to a shared service solution.

Do you know what the transactional cost of your MIS function is (or any other support function) or how it compares to those of other colleges? Maybe a transactional cost analysis of your support functions would be a good place to start when considering the challenges of next year’s allocation.

Gary Williams
Director of FE & HE Services, Tribal



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FE Week gets technical

The BIS Select Committee invited Nick Linford, Managing Director of Lsect and Managing Editor of *FE Week*, to present a briefing about the growth of apprenticeships. The briefing was mentioned at the select committee session (see pages 12-13), and the briefing slides are published here in full.

Proposition

Growth in 25+ apprenticeships is out of control, a distraction from 16-24 priority and simply the discredited Train to Gain scheme under another name anyway

The National Apprenticeship Service was set-up to sell apprenticeships to employers. Very successful with large employers but at expense of quality and value for money

Response has been slow and uncoordinated (owing to lack of clarity regarding responsibilities)

The definition of an apprenticeship is in question, with potential to damage/destroy the brand

1

This is a relatively new proposition



We were the first to report a problem (13th June 2011)

18 July 2011

NAS given responsibility for quality and value for money

October 2011

NAS begin a formal a review into quality

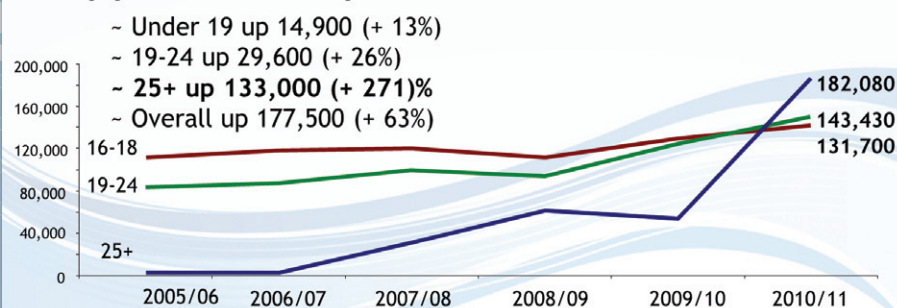
December 2011

John Hayes reports some changes to parliament

Let's look at the evidence

2

Apprenticeship starts since 2005/06



The Labour Party introduced 25+ apprenticeships, and were concerned when double the planned 25,000 starts were delivered. Last year under the Coalition Government the 25+ apprenticeships starts figure was an unplanned 182,100

Source: Statistical First Release, January 2012

3

Apprenticeship starts last year

Age	2009/10	2010/11	Shift	Shift	Shift	Shift
Under 16	400	320	-80	-20%		
16	29,380	30,490	1,110	4%	+ 14,920	+ 13%
17	40,780	44,840	4,060	10%		
18	46,220	56,050	9,830	21%		
19-24	113,770	143,430	29,660	26%	+ 77,810	+ 56%
25-34	25,250	73,400	48,150	191%		
35-44	13,680	54,470	40,790	298%	+ 84,790	+ 355%
45-59	9,810	50,320	40,510	413%		
60+	400	3,890	3,490	873%		
All	279,690	457,210	177,520	63%	+ 177,520	+ 63%

Massive unplanned growth in those aged 35+

Source: Statistical First Release, supplementary tables published 13/02/12

4

Apprenticeship starts so far this year

Age	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
	Quarter 1 (provisional)	Quarter 1 (provisional)	Quarter 1 (provisional)
Under 19	48,600	54,200	53,700
19-24	34,200	36,600	44,700
25+	13,000	29,000	53,300
Total	95,800	119,800	151,700

25+ already up 84% on same time last year

Under 19 down 1% on same time last year

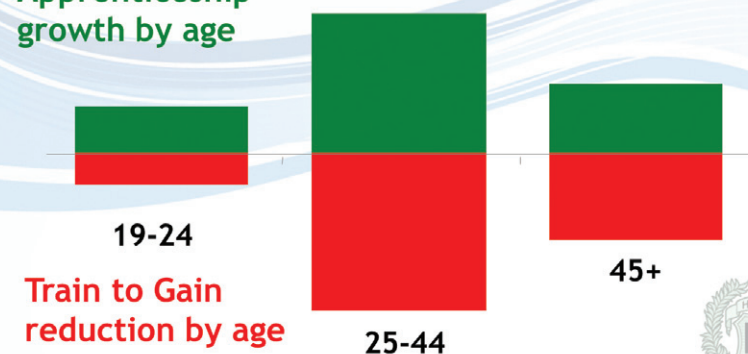
Source: Statistical First Release, supplementary tables published 13/02/12

5

Where has the growth come from?

Last year 19+ Train to Gain starts fell by 175,200 as Apprenticeships increased by 162,600

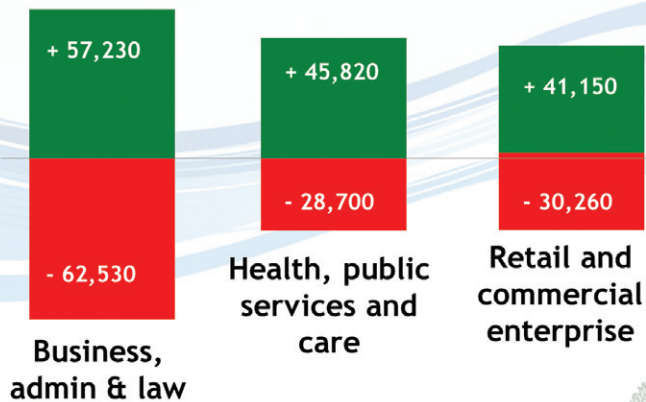
Apprenticeship growth by age



6

Where has the growth come from?

Apprenticeship starts by sector



Train to Gain starts by sector

Example: Elmfield Training Ltd Apprenticeship starts at Morrisons

Age	2009/10 full year	2010/11 First 9 months
16-18	760	290
19-24	4,520	2,220
25+	0	17,870
Total	5,280	20,380

Response from SFA said:

- 99% L2 apprenticeships in retail
- Planned to take 56 weeks but taking 28

Source: Obtained from an FOI request to the Skills Funding Agency

Elmfield Training Ltd

Started 2010/11 with an SFA contract of £21m, which doubled to £40m at start of quarter three (presumably mostly to pay for Morrisons growth)

Pre-tax profits for previous financial year of £12.3m (36%) on a £33.8m turnover

No evidence of significant income other than that derived directly or indirectly from the SFA

No evidence of Morrisons growth being for many other than existing staff

Owner of Elmfield Training (Gerard Syddall) also set-up an Awarding Body to certificate Elmfield Training courses

Elmfield Training first inspected by Ofsted in July 2011 and graded 3 (satisfactory). "The ambition for learners in retail programmes is not sufficiently challenging".

Source: SFA allocations spreadsheet, Companies House, Ofsted

Conclusion re Morrisons and Elmfield

It's a good case study given it's the largest apprenticeship employer working with the "fastest growing vocational training provider in the UK"

I believe it demonstrates NAS and SFA:

- ~ Disregard for quality
- ~ Disregard for value for money
- ~ Disregard for prioritising 16-24 year-olds
- All because
- ~ **Desperation to achieve the additional growth**

In May 2011 the SFA allocated £8m to City & Guilds for Business (a wholly own subsidiary of the awarding body) to deliver 25,000 ASDA apprenticeships.

Government funding rates for 2012/13

16-18	Funding rate reduced by 2%
19-24	No change to 50% co-funded reduction
25+	No change to additional 20% deduction
19+ Large employer discount	No change to additional 25% deduction

Reducing 16-18 rate (after £15m shortfall) is unnecessary and IMHO **policy gone mad**

19+ rates have failed to dampen demand nor stimulate employer fees

Conclusion

The government seem to be taking the quality issue seriously now (with a further nudge from the NAO report)

But are 25+ apprenticeships out of control, and should they still be funded to anything like the current level, if at all?

Train to Gain rightly remains an appropriate training programme (even if the government have yet to come up with a new name)

FE Week campus round-up



David Cameron and John Hayes MP visit apprentices from Havering College

A group of Havering College apprentices employed by leading companies met Prime Minister David Cameron last month.

Fourteen apprentices from energy giants EDF, technology company e2v and the Cycle Systems Academy - all taking Level 2 courses through the college - were on hand as the Prime Minister announced a new round of government funding to support thousands of apprenticeships up to degree equivalent.

The event was held at Crossrail's £13million Tunnelling and Underground Construction Academy (TUCA) in East

London.

The Havering College students were accompanied by interim director of technology Stuart Woosnam who is responsible for the delivery of apprenticeships and bespoke training to some of the most successful technology companies in the region.

He said: "It was good to be invited to this event and it was a positive experience for the apprentices.

"They were eager at the prospect of meeting the Prime Minister and were very interested in what he had to say."

West Thames College students makeup showcase



West Thames College's talented makeup students performed live-demonstrations at the Treaty Shopping Centre in Hounslow.

Stopping shoppers in their tracks with an incredible display of bodypainting and theatrical makeup techniques, the students also applied the makeup for a series of spectacular fashion shows organised by students from the University of West London and produced by the Watermans arts centre.

It was held as part of the Hounslow Fashion Weekend celebrations. The Outer London Fund event also saw music displays and hair-art performances.



Children inspired by Northampton College initiative

Northampton College kicked off a global education initiative by hosting the 1,000mph Bloodhound Car as part of an innovative new programme to inspire the County's budding Mathematicians, Scientists and Engineers

A life-size replica of the Bloodhound car along with its V8 Cosworth F1 engine, which drives the rocket fuel pump, was based in the college's brand new engineering studios at Booth Lane for three days last month.

The public, local businesses and hundreds of school children from across the county were among those who came to see the car.

Warrington Collegiate team shortlisted



Warrington Collegiate is proving it can stand the heat after being selected as one of the contenders in the catering competition, the Nestle Toque D'Or.

The competition, which boasts James Martin and Jamie Oliver among past competitors, sets teams of three students the MasterChef-style challenge of cooking a healthy lunch for six courses, two for judging and four for invited diners in two hours.

Students will be judged on everything from the food they serve, to the design of the menu, presentation and service on the day.

Warrington Collegiate's talented trio are the youngest team in the competition.

Head Chef of the team, 18 year old Sam Shawcross, from Woolston, said: "It is a lot of hard work, but a massive opportunity as we will be judged by top chefs in the industry. I'm really enjoying it; the rewards are fantastic if you win."

Commis Chef, 17 year old Siobhan Lindsay, from Dallam and the youngest in the competition, added: "You've got to make sure your food is just right and meets the strict criteria of the competition. It's really, really fun and exciting."

Front of House for the team, 17 year old Toni Commerford, from Birchwood said: "It's amazing, but scary."

Alfreton Town Football Club to recruit up to 40 apprentices from Derby College



Alfreton Town Football Club is launching the second phase of its Community Academy initiative.

The latest development gives local young people the chance to gain sports leadership qualifications through a pioneering apprenticeship programme.

The club, promoted last season to the Blue Square Bet Premier Division, works with Derby College to recruit the apprentices.

The aim is to have up to 40 apprentices at the club in the next 12 months who will be working full time with local schools and community groups to provide free or low cost sporting

activities for children and young people whilst working towards NVQ level three qualifications in Activity Leadership.

April Hayhurst, head of employer engagement at Derby College, said: "Having recruited the first four apprentices for the club, we are now working with coaches and young people to start qualifications which will be invaluable for their future working lives.

"We are starting recruitment for the next stage of 20 young people and are confident that we will be a great response from young people who will be keen to take advantage of this exciting and pioneering programme."

City College Southampton student set to compete in hairdressing competition

City College Southampton student Sarah Jacobs is hoping to be a cut above the rest at a national hairdressing competition.

The Level 3 hairdressing student will compete in the Wella Professional Xposure competition in London on March 8.

Sarah will compete against over 15 other colleges and hair academies around the UK, where she will be required to recreate her look and present it on a catwalk in front of the judging panel.

Julie Burrows, co-ordinator for Level 3 hairdressing, said: "I'm delighted to see Sarah at this stage of the competition."

"She is a very talented student and this is an amazing opportunity for her. I know she will do City College proud."

Sarah (19) said: "I'm really happy about getting this far in the competition and while I'm a little nervous about presenting my look in front of the judges I know it'll be a great experience and really help me develop my skills."

"I'm hoping to get into a salon once I leave college in June so this will be brilliant for my CV."



Nick Clegg puts the icing on the cake with City of Bath College apprentices

Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg became a cake decorator for the day during a visit to City of Bath College to meet young apprentices.

Mr Clegg, who was joined on his visit by Bath MP Don Foster, met apprentices from several different industry areas at the college's Shrubbery Restaurant, before trying his hand at cake decorating in the college's new kitchens.

During his visit, Mr Clegg also took the opportunity to meet with local business leaders in the new multi-million pound Roper Building.

Mr Clegg said: "I think it's brilliant. I go

and visit a lot of colleges and I really do believe this is a very strong college.

"It has a great new building and it is offering the most fantastic opportunities for its students."

"I have always been a massive fan of apprenticeships."

"So many people talk young people down but when you see these people, working in the college and the experience they are getting, it is so uplifting."

Matt Atkinson, college principal, said: "It was a pleasure to have the Deputy Prime Minister visit us and meet with our talented apprentices."



Students at MidKent Colleges give donated trees a new home

Animal management students breathed new life into a community park with the planting of several donated trees.

The hard-working youngsters got their hands dirty at the Lower Lines Park in Gillingham - next to MidKent College's Medway Campus.

Open to the public since 2010, the former Ministry of Defence land is managed by the Lower Lines Trust in partnership with the local community.

The plants, which were a mix of cherry trees and Field Maple, were donated by local contractors Hortech.

Park manager Kevin Woolford said: "This is the biggest classroom the animal management students have available at the end of the day. It's a fantastic resource."

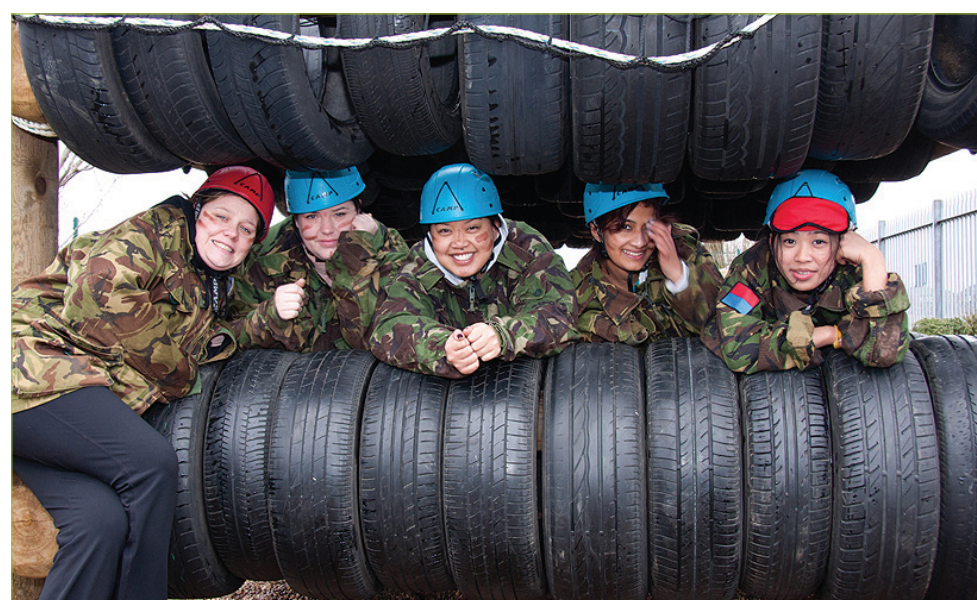
Laying foundations at Rotherham College of Arts and Technology



An assistant principal at Rotherham College of Arts and Technology swapped the warmth and comfort of the office for an afternoon of dirt and sweat as she went to work alongside construction students.

Ann Hardy spent the afternoon work-shadowing a group of apprentices to see how they are settling in to their roles. She joined the apprentices in their first block paving job at Clifton Park Museum and was on hand to help cut the bricks into different shapes for the design.

She said: "I'm really enjoying the apprenticeship so far and block paving is new to me, so this is a first. I enjoy plastering the best and it's an area I'd like to learn more about."



North Lindsey College return the favour by hosting Canadian exchange students

North Lindsey College welcomed visitors from Canada as part of an exchange programme.

Khiara Remedios G Albaran and Jessica Gariba are both studying childcare, while Ashley Arruda and Marcy D'Atri are doing sport and recreation.

Jenny Quianzon, professor in early childhood education, is accompanying them for the visit from Centennial College, in Toronto. During their stay, the visitors will be spending time in the curriculum, including taking a certified course Award in Substance Misuse Awareness, visiting off-site locations, and participating in social activities with

their English peers.

Ashley was particularly keen to participate as she had been a student ambassador when the group from North Lindsey College visited Toronto last October.

She said: "We are incredibly grateful for this experience and to everyone at North Lindsey for making us so welcome and planning so many great activities."

Wayne Dewick, associate director of Learner Services, took part in the college's visit to Toronto.

He said: "We had such a great time with them in Toronto last October and are delighted to host them for this return visit."

FE Week events...

Apprenticeships in the spotlight

Nick Summers

@summersnicholas

Employer contributions and the 'rebadging' of former Train to Gain provision were both heavily debated at the first evidence session of the BIS Select Committee inquiry into apprenticeships.

The two hour session, held at Portcullis House in Westminster last Thursday, covered a wide range of issues about the funding, delivery and quality of the apprenticeship programme.

Graham Hoyle, chief executive of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP), Alex Jackman, senior policy adviser at the Forum of Private Business (FPB) and Denis Hird, chief executive of JTL Training, were called on by the committee to explain some of the growing issues in the sector.

Mr Hoyle said on the panel the issue of who paid for an apprenticeship was "a nettle yet to be fully grasped" and any changes in the funding system would need to consider the returns of all three beneficiaries; the learner, the employer and central government.

Mr Hoyle said: "The one we haven't tackled yet is - what is it therefore the employers are paying if they're getting a return?"

"My own view is that they should be paying for the basic skill competencies."

Mr Hird agreed that employer contributions were an issue that needed to be addressed both by the further education sector and central government.

"We need to understand what apprenticeships are, what is company training, what is company induction, what should be funded, what shouldn't be funded and what employers contribute to," Mr Hird said.

Earlier in the session Mr Hoyle said the apprenticeship programme should be owned by employers because it was in fact businesses, not government, who were paying for the majority of the delivery.

"We need to revisit who is paying for what within apprenticeships," Mr Hoyle said.

"The prime contributors and payers at present time are employers - although we don't put it in that way - with a contribution from the government."

However, the AELP chief executive maintained that it should be the government's responsibility to fund the educational elements of the apprenticeship framework to learners of all ages.

Mr Hoyle said: "My own view is that the government should be making sure that individuals are continued to be funded to get them up to a basic level of English, maths, literacy, numeracy and functional skills, so they can play a part in the labour market and get the transferable skills they need to move to the next employer."

"I believe the state have a reasonable responsibility to complete the education of those people."

Members of the BIS Select Committee, led by Adrian Bailey MP, said they were worried government funding was being used to deliver training which would have otherwise been paid for by the employer.

David Ward, MP for Bradford East and a

member of the BIS Select Committee, said: "I am a little bit worried about some of these apprentices, these older apprentices."

"The criticism that is there, which we referred to earlier, is that it's just ongoing personal development and it's not professional development."

"If it's personal development, it should just be happening anyway and why badge that with this apprenticeship title? That's the thing I'm unsure about."

Mr Ward then asked the panel to respond to the accusation that the record growth in apprenticeships could be attributed mostly to the conversion of Train to Gain delivery.

Mr Hird admitted that the 'rebadging' of Train to Gain courses, especially in the retail sector, had damaged the apprenticeship brand.

"I think what has been unfortunate is large volumes in the supermarket chain where they've badged up some of their induction programmes as apprenticeships to rack up the statistics," Mr Hird said.

"Whilst I think that is good and I think the chap from Asda, who is actually an ex-work colleague of mine, he said whilst they had put 25,000 through he hadn't created one extra job."

Mr Jackman told *FE Week* it was unfair to blame large employers for taking advantage of government schemes which would help support their daily operations.

Speaking after the evidence session, the senior policy adviser highlighted the work of Barclays, a high street bank set to launch a new apprenticeship scheme in April for 1,000 people not in employment, education or training (NEET).

Perhaps most importantly, Mr Jackman said Barclays would be running the scheme without any government contributions.

Mr Jackman said: "At the end of the process the view being taken by Barclays is - if they move onto other banks, that is something they have contributed to the industry, but if they stay within Barclays themselves, then that's something they've contributed towards their own business."

Earlier in the session Mr Hoyle was quick to defend the negative remarks about Train to Gain, describing the scheme as being "rubbed too easily" during its existence.

The AELP chief executive said: "Train to Gain, despite much of what was written, was a very successful scheme at actually upskilling the adult workforce."

"That's the view of myself, my members and the employers that worked with it."

Mr Jackman also defended short duration apprenticeships during the evidence session, suggesting they be rebranded as "basic" or "entry" level apprenticeships.

After the session Mr Jackman told *FE Week*: "I think there is a mismatch at present between what a lot of employers consider to be an apprenticeship and what the government might consider to be an apprenticeship."

"But that is not to say that either of them are wrong."

"I think as long as you can ensure quality within courses which match up to what an apprenticeship is considered to be."

"As long as you ensure money isn't being sucked away from SMEs, then I see no reason why some shorter apprenticeships should not be counted as such."



Left to right - Select Committee witnesses: Alex Jackman, Forum of Private Business Denis Hird, JTL Training and Graham Hoyle, AELP



Watch the committee session online via Parliament TV: <http://tinyurl.com/BIS-Committee>

Q&A with Denis Hird, CEO of JTL Training

You mentioned to the committee that you were disappointed with the 25,000 apprenticeship places created at Asda. Can you expand upon that?

First of all, I'm not being critical of Asda. There was huge pressure on the National Apprenticeship Service to raise the number of apprenticeships and so therefore if you look at how Asda is introducing young people into their business - they have a training programme, which I'm pretty sure is a good one knowing Asda - and that it's been branded as an apprenticeship. And that's to save money. I can't blame Asda for doing that because it has met the targets. And that's all good! Good for young people, good for Asda.

But what I think David Smith, the HR director of Asda was saying on national TV was that they would have spent the money and they were going to employ that 25,000. So in actual fact they haven't created any extra

jobs through that process.

Is there a concern that employers would have provided the training even if the apprenticeship funding hadn't been available?

Absolutely. But you can't blame Asda for taking the money and you can't blame the National Apprenticeship Service because it lifted the statistics by 25,000. From our point of view, what it does is, it says that that short programme of training - and it'll be very good and we need people to do those very good jobs that they do - is that it potentially erodes at the brand of our four year and two month programme at the top end of our electrotechnical and building services frameworks.

I'm not saying it is wrong, I'm saying it needs to be looked at in a different way about what is an apprenticeship and what isn't, what are the various levels and what is the best use of government funding.

Would asking large employers to make a financial contribution to training help ensure there were new jobs and additional training?

I think that large employers can play a major role in giving opportunities for apprenticeships in work for young people. I think that the funding bodies, in particular the Skills Funding Agency, with advice as well from the National Apprenticeship Service, can work with those employers at what the best and most appropriate way is to use government funding in part of the strategic funding and plans for those large employers.

That's a discussion that they should have. I don't have a view other than it's good news if it's going to bring more people into apprenticeships and into jobs.

The JTL website states that they are: "The leading training provider to the building services engineering sectors, works with 3,500 business and supports 9,700 apprentices to deliver more Advanced Apprenticeships than anyone else in the sector."

BIS Select Committee



Adrian Bailey (Chair)
Labour/Co-op
MP for West Bromwich West



Brian Binley
Conservative
MP for Northampton South



Paul Blomfield
Labour
MP for Sheffield Central



Katy Clark
Labour
MP for North Ayrshire and Arran



Julie Elliot
Labour
MP for Sunderland Central



Rebecca Harris
Conservative
MP for Castle Point



Margot James
Conservative
MP for Stourbridge



Simon Kirby
Conservative
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You will have a demonstrable track record of success as well as energy, enthusiasm and creativity in order to explore opportunities to develop our ambitious growth plans.

If you have the skills and experience and would like to be part of our exciting future we would like to hear from you. To discuss this role in further detail please contact Graham Guest, Vice Principal – Curriculum and Quality on **01322 404031**.

Bexley College is committed to the safeguarding of vulnerable adults and all posts are subject to an enhanced CRB disclosure prior to starting employment. The College looks to positively promote equality of opportunity and welcomes applicants from all sections of the community.

If you feel you have the qualities we are asking for and are looking for a new and exciting challenge then please apply online at **www.bexley.ac.uk**. Alternatively, you can email us at **hr@bexley.ac.uk** or call our 24 hour recruitment line for an application pack on **01322 404240**. Please note the College does not accept CV's only.

Closing Date: 9th March 2012



Director of Newcastle Sixth Form College

Salary circa £60K + benefits Ref: SIX 6210

Closing date: 12 March 2012

As part of NCG, Newcastle College is one of the largest and highest performing colleges in the UK.

We are seeking a new Director of school to take forward the next phase of our growing Sixth Form College with a new building opening in 2013.

This is an excellent opportunity for an outstanding individual to make a real impact on the success of 1800 young people studying AS, A2 and International Baccalaureate.

The successful candidate will:-

- Be results focused and able to demonstrate a history of meeting and exceeding targets in a fast paced environment
- Have strong operational exposure and in depth knowledge of excellence in teaching, learning and Sixth Form ethos
- Have confidence, credibility, energy, drive and determination
- Be able to lead and manage staff and make a strong contribution to the college SMT.

Application forms and further information about this post and all current externally advertised vacancies are available on the College Website **www.newcastlecollege.co.uk** or by e-mailing **recruitment@ncl-coll.ac.uk** or from the Shared Services Department, 1st Floor, Sandyford Campus, Sandyford Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 8QE. Please quote the reference number of the post in which you are interested.

Interviews for this post will be held on 22 and 23 March 2012.



New Courses New Skills New You
www.newcastlecollege.co.uk

Interim Managers Director of HR and HR Managers

FE Associates is one of the leading providers of interim management services to the sector. We are looking to strengthen our team of salaried HR interim managers and are inviting applications from suitably qualified and experienced HR professionals at both Director of HR and HR Manager level. We would also welcome CVs from HR associates who wish to work with us on a self-employed basis.

You will be highly motivated and flexible, have significant HR management experience, ideally with recent college experience. Applicants need to be prepared to travel and stay away from home when required. In return we offer a competitive remuneration package and a friendly and supportive environment.

Closing date for applications is Monday 19th March.

For an informal chat please call Steve Hutchinson on 01823 337655.

To apply please send your CV to Steve Hutchinson, FE Associates, 1 High Street, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 3PG or email recruitment@feassociates.com



Be part of our bright new future

West Thames College is a vibrant, exciting and successful College of FE and HE.

Our shared vision is to be outstanding in everything we do. It's a great place to work and the perfect time to join us.

Visit west-thames.ac.uk to find out what makes us so special and apply online.

Request our application pack: 020 8560 5582 (24hrs) or email: personnel@west-thames.ac.uk

No CV's please

**Skills Centre Director
Feltham, West London
£51,749pa inclusive
Permanent/36 hours per week**

We're looking for a strong, dynamic leader with a proven track record together with the vision, creativity and drive to secure the long-term future of our Skills Centre based in Feltham, west London.

You will inspire and motivate staff whilst building an excellent reputation for the Centre. You will forge collaborative relations with employers and stakeholders, developing new income streams and implementing strategies to ensure the Skills Centre plays a major role in transforming the future prospects of local people and businesses.

As a pivotal member of the Senior Management Team, you will have overall responsibility for the management of the staff, resources and provision of the Centre, driving up quality and success rates to help position the college as a recognised centre of excellence.

West Thames College is one of the most vibrant and exciting colleges of further and higher education in London. Our vision is to be outstanding in everything we do. Our students consistently achieve high success rates and often win national and international competitions in their respective fields. It's a great place to work and a great time to join us.

Closing date: 10:00am - Monday 12 March 2012

The Selection process will take place over two days – dates to be confirmed



T R I B A L

Business Consultant x 2, Sheffield

We are currently seeking applicants for Consultants within our ebs consultancy team.

The purpose of the roles is to deliver training and consultancy services to our users of the education business system (ebs) currently in use by over 120 institutions in the UK and New Zealand.

Application Business Consultant

(£35-40K plus £4500 car allowance)

The person we are seeking will have a good understanding of the further education market and will have experience of using or implementing student records software applications within their current organisation. An understanding and experience of project management and FE business processes will be an advantage. An ability to work with customers and build excellent relationships is essential in this role and the successful candidate will need to demonstrate good interpersonal skills as well as a desire to make a positive difference to our customers.

Technical Business Consultant

(£35-40K plus £4500 car allowance)

The person we are seeking will have strong technical skills and an ability to deliver technical solutions and training to our customers. An excellent knowledge of SQL in an Oracle and/or SQL Server environment is essential along with strong programming skills in one or more of the following is desired; visual basic, PHP, HTML, visual studio, reporting services. Experience of delivering technical solutions with in the FE sector, whilst not essential, is preferred.

We would welcome applicants who have not worked in education if you can demonstrate experience in the skills desired along with a willingness to learn.

The work with these vacancies will involve visiting clients and so the role could require extensive travel and overnight stays.

If you think you have the skills to make a positive difference to our customers then please apply to jobs@tribalgroupp.com

Closing date for applications: 17th March

Tribal is an equal opportunities employer and has publicly committed to this by signing up to the Two Ticks Positive About Disabled People scheme. This ensures that all disabled applicants, able to demonstrate that they meet the minimum criteria of the job description are guaranteed an interview.

If you are disabled and feel this applies to you, please let us know by quoting 'I am eligible for a guaranteed interview under the two ticks scheme' in your covering letter. Please make sure this is written as a separate paragraph to ensure it does not get lost in the content of your application.



South Downs College

South Downs College is an Ofsted 'Outstanding' and Beacon status FE College with over 11,000 learners. We are based in attractive South East Hampshire and have an annual turnover of circa £34 million

An exciting opportunity has arisen to join our prestigious and successful College. The ideal applicant would be a senior manager and accountant who would take a strategic lead in ensuring the College's financial future. Extensive and current knowledge of further education funding and finance is essential.

Director of Finance

Up to £75k

For further details and to apply online please visit www.southdowns.ac.uk
For an informal discussion about this vacancy contact John Manterfield,
Acting Principal, on 023 9279 7937

Closing date: Noon on Monday 12 March 2012

Selection process: Thursday 29 March and Monday 2 April 2012



TRURO AND PENWITH COLLEGE

We are one of the top Tertiary Colleges in the country and have been awarded Beacon College status in recognition of this. At the last inspection the College was awarded Grade One Outstanding in all areas. If you would like to play a role in our continued success we currently have the following vacancies:

FULL TIME LECTURERS REQUIRED:

Salary will be based on a band in the range of
£23,510 - £34,911

To start in September 2012 unless stated otherwise

Applicants should hold a degree or similar professional qualification and a recognised teaching qualification.

CATERING

The ideal applicant will have extensive experience of Catering and a proven track record in education sector, teaching experience and a commitment to the delivery of an outstanding learning experience to our students. Applicants should hold an NVQ level 3 or equivalent, a Certificate in Education or equivalent and the A1 assessors' award. A verifier's award (V1 or equivalent) would also be desirable. Previous applicants will be carried forward.

CONSTRUCTION

Applicants should hold a minimum of a level 3 qualification in a trowel trade (bricklaying/ plastering) and have at least five years experience working in the construction industry. Applicants should preferably hold a recognised teaching qualification and assessor/verifier awards, or equivalent, would be desirable. The successful candidate will be responsible for the delivery of Construction related programmes from Entry Level to Level 3 including Apprenticeships.

ENGLISH

1 based at Truro and 1 based at Penwith.

The successful candidates will be able to contribute to all aspects of our provision: GCSE English and AS/A level and our English Studies Foundation degree. The successful candidate for Truro will also contribute to the IB and Functional Skills. An interest in linguistics is an advantage. The successful candidate will also be committed to our tutorial programme.

ELECTRONICS & AUTOMOTIVE ELECTRONIC ENGINEERING

You will be required to teach across a range of practical/academic courses. The successful candidate will also be committed to our tutorial programme.

HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE

The successful candidate will teach across a range of related vocational courses. Previous sector experience and knowledge of BTEC qualifications would be a great advantage.

MOTOR VEHICLE STUDIES

1 x based at Truro to start September 2012.

2 x based at Penwith to start as soon as possible.

Applicants should hold a minimum of a level 3 qualification in their trade and have at least five years experience working in the motor industry. Applicants should preferably hold a recognised teaching qualification and Assessor/Verifier Awards or equivalent would also be desirable. The successful candidates will be responsible for the delivery of Motor Vehicle Studies from Entry Level to Level 3 programmes including Apprenticeships.

PUBLIC SERVICES

The successful candidate will teach across vocational programmes at level 2 and 3. There may also be the opportunity to deliver at foundation degree level for suitably qualified applicants.

Please note that the following posts are based at our Penwith campus in Penzance:

GEOGRAPHY/WORLD DEVELOPMENT

The successful candidate will teach across AS/A2 and be committed to our tutorial programme.

PSYCHOLOGY

The successful candidate will teach across AS/A2 and HND Applied Psychology and be committed to our tutorial programme.

BUSINESS & ECONOMICS

The successful candidate will teach across AS/A2, BTEC Business levels 2/3, Extended National Diploma in Business and Business Management modules at Foundation degree level.

MEDIA

The successful candidate will ideally have the ability to teach across AS/A2 and vocational programmes. Experience of pastoral care and course management would be an advantage.

GAMES DEVELOPMENT, MEDIA & FILM STUDIES

The successful candidate will ideally have the ability to teach across AS/A2 and vocational programmes. Experience of pastoral care and course management would be an advantage.

Applications for the above posts should reach us by FIRST POST ON:

FRIDAY 9 MARCH 2012

Curriculum Vitae are not accepted, Application Forms only.

Successful candidates will be notified within 4 weeks of the closing date.



To apply please call 01872 267000

email: recruitment@truro-penwith.ac.uk

or download a Job Description and Application form

from: www.truro-penwith.ac.uk

Truro and Penwith College,
College Road, Truro, Cornwall TR1 3XX



Truro and Penwith College is an Equal Opportunities Employer and is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.



For more job listings go to:
www.feweek.co.uk



The perfect match?

Visit us at **Stand 7** at 'LSIS - Making a reality of Functional Skills' Convention - **March 26, London**



You + SQA.

Some things just go together. Like you and a national qualifications body that puts you first. For more information, give us a buzz.

t: 0303 333 0330 e: mycentre@sqa.org.uk

w: www.sqa.org.uk/businessdevelopment



FE Week Sudoku challenge

4	1		2			6		5
	5			1		9	8	2
3	2				9			
		3		7				4
	9		6		8		7	
2				9		3		
			7				4	6
1	8	5		4			2	
6		7			3		5	9

Difficulty:
EASY

How to play: Fill in all blank squares making sure that each row, column and 3 by 3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9

Solutions: Next week

2				7		1		
				6		9		2
	6		2			4		
					8	5		
5			6		7			3
		8	4					
		6			3		8	
3		1		2				
		5		1				6

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Last Week's solutions

6	7	9	5	1	8	2	3	4
4	1	3	2	6	9	8	7	5
5	8	2	7	4	3	9	6	1
7	2	4	8	5	1	6	9	3
9	6	5	4	3	2	7	1	8
1	3	8	9	7	6	4	5	2
3	5	7	6	2	4	1	8	9
8	4	1	3	9	7	5	2	6
2	9	6	1	8	5	3	4	7

Difficulty:
EASY

7	1	2	6	4	9	8	5	3
5	8	3	7	1	2	9	6	4
9	4	6	8	3	5	7	1	2
2	5	9	1	7	4	6	3	8
1	6	7	9	8	3	2	4	5
8	3	4	5	2	6	1	7	9
3	9	5	2	6	1	4	8	7
6	2	8	4	5	7	3	9	1
4	7	1	3	9	8	5	2	6

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

FE Week mini-mascot

Follow the adventures of *FE Week's* biggest and smallest fan!



"Mostly this week I have been cleaning Granny's car"

You can also follow our *FE Week* mini-mascot on Twitter @daniellinford